REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-36 and 38-51 are currently pending, Claims 1, 14, 15, 28, 29, 32, and 40 having been amended, and Claim 51 having been newly added. The changes and additions to the claims do not add new matter and are supported by the originally filed specification, for example, on page 15, line 4 to page 16, line 4; page 38, lines 3-17; and Figures 1 and 2. No new matter is added.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-8, 10-11, 14-22, 24-25, 28-36, 39-48, and 50 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Makitni (JP 10-190930); and Claims 9, 12-13, 23, 26-27, 38, and 49 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Makitni in view of Ginter et al. (U.S. Pub. No. 2006/0224903, hereafter "Ginter").

With respect to the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), Applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to Claim 1 overcomes this ground of rejection. Amended Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*,

> an external server communication part, which receives pre-registered user authentication information from an external server through the internet;
>
> wherein the external server stores the pre-registered user authentication information independently from the apparatus at a separate location on the internet.

Figure 1 shows a non-limiting embodiment of these features. An image forming apparatus 100 includes external server communication part 152 that receives pre-registered user authentication information from external server 300 through network 170 (see page 15, lines 11-16). As shown in Figure 1, external server 300 stores the pre-registered

authentication information independently from image forming apparatus 100 at a separate location through the internet (see page 15, line 11 to page 16, line 4). In other words, image forming apparatus 100 does not need to store the authentication database locally, which advantageously decreases its load because it doesn't have to maintain the database (see page 28, line 13 to page 29, line 7).

Makitni describes a method of managing user ID numbers for a copy machine. Figure 1 of Makitni shows copy machine 107 on a Local Area Network (LAN). Makitni describes that copy machine 107 has a liquid crystal touch panel which interacts with control unit 221 (see para. 0014). A user can register an ID number from control unit 221 (see para. 0030). After the user registers the ID number, the registered ID number is notified to management equipment 222 through interface 214 (see para.0041). A user can also register a network user ID from the control unit (see para. 0043). The network user ID is saved on a non-volatile memory in copy machine 107 (see para. 0048). When a user later inputs an ID number to the control unit, the copy machine transmits the inputted ID number to management equipment 222 through an interface 214 (see para. 0052). Management equipment 222 judges whether there is a match between the ID number inputted to a registered ID number, and if there is a match then the copy machine is enabled to be activated (see para. 0053). If a network ID is inputted to copy machine 107 then copy machine 107 searches a table to match the inputted network ID to an ID number suitable to transmit to management equipment 222. As discussed above, management equipment 222 will enable the copy machine if the inputted ID number matches a registered ID number (see para. 0060 – 0065).

Makitni also describes that the copy machine itself does not have to perform the translation from a network user ID to a user ID number that can be transmitted to management equipment 222, and instead this translation can be performed from another computer on the network (see para. 0073-0074). However, even in that example, the copy

machine still needs to transmit the translated user ID to management equipment 222 to verify if there is a matching registered ID number before enabling the copy machine (see para. 0075).

According to the outstanding the Office Action, the management equipment 222 corresponds to the claimed external server (see page 3 of the Office Action citing para. 0006, 0007, and 0041 of Makitni). However, as seen in Figure 2 of Makitni, management equipment 222 is directly connected to the copy machine 207 because it connected through interface 214 that is separate from the LAN interface 212. Therefore, management equipment 222 is not at a separate location on the internet from copy machine 107.

Therefore, Makitni fails to disclose or suggest ***an external server that stores the pre-registered user authentication information independently from the apparatus at a separate location on the internet***, as defined in amended Claim 1.

Ginter has been considered but fails to remedy the deficiencies of Makitni as discussed above with regards to Claim 1.

Independent Claims 15, 29, 32, and 40 recite features similar to those of amended Claim 1. Therefore, independent Claims 1, 15, 29, 32, and 40 (and all dependent claims) patentably distinguish over Makitni and Ginter, taken either alone or in proper combination.

With respect to new dependent Claim 51, Claim 51 recites, *inter alia*,

> the one or more authentication parts is a plurality of authentication parts, and
>
> the use control part is configured to connect the plurality of authentication parts with the one or more applications.

Figure 12 shows a non-limiting example of these features. Figure 12 shows that the certified control service (CCS) 129 of the image forming apparatus connects a plurality of authentication billing systems (authentication parts) to one or more applications. In other

words, a plurality of authentication systems such as a key counter, coin device, or key card reader may be used with one of a plurality of applications on the image forming apparatus (see specification at page 38, lines 3-17).

Makitni describes a touch-panel unit on a liquid crystal display connected to copy machine 107 for inputting information such as an ID number (see para. 36-40). Therefore, only one authentication part is described by Makitni. Thus, Makinti fails to disclose or suggest ***a plurality of authentication parts and a use control part that is configured to connect the plurality of authentication parts with one or more applications,*** as recited in dependent Claim 51.

Ginter has been considered but fails to remedy the deficiencies of Makitni as discussed above with regards to Claim 51.

Therefore, for at least the foregoing reasons, Claim 51 patentably distinguishes over Makitni and Ginter, taken either alone or in proper combination.

Consequently, in light of the above discussion and in view of the present amendment, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The present application is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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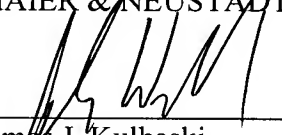

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